A Letter from the Bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

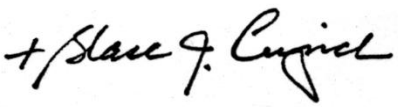
News reports and commentary have created misperceptions about some of my recent statements and writings, which now require a response for the good of the Church. The first has to do with my essay in *America*, "Racism and the Election," of which only excerpts appeared in the media. As I explained to those attending the Friday lunch at the Cathedral on November 14, other bishops and myself became concerned about repeated racist statements made prior to the election and reported on in the media, some sadly made by Catholics. It seemed timely to recall the Catholic Church's strong record against such hateful language and prejudice. My aim was not to indicate how people should vote, and surely not that someone should be accused of racism by voting or not voting in a certain way. The main point was simply that there are many reasons to vote for or against a candidate, but racism cannot be one of them. Some asked if I was equating racism with the evil of abortion by linking the two as intrinsic evils. But parishioners should recall that this link was made by the bishops of this country in the statement "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship": *A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position.* That is precisely the point of my essay.

Some also asked if I was saying that abortion and racism are equally sinful. Surely the moral weight of these two issues differs greatly, since abortion is a crime that involves the taking of innocent human life. Moreover, we already have laws that discourage racism, whereas the unborn are not protected, since abortion is legally permitted throughout the country, mistakenly regarded by some as a fundamental right. However, that does not mean that we should hesitate to condemn racism whenever it raises its very dangerous and ugly head in our beloved nation. For too many generations, our country has suffered from the personal and social devastation which the plague of discrimination and segregation has inflicted on so many of our fellow citizens. I am convinced that by taking on the issue of racism, which was so prominent in the media prior to the election, the Church offers a more credible and compelling defense of the unborn, for this demonstrates that our message on the dignity of human life is a matter of principle, not partisan politics.

A second misperception was created by the news report following the luncheon at the Cathedral on November 14, namely that I care only about peace, health care, education and the like, whereas the other bishops are concerned only about abortion. Those attending the luncheon will recall that, as I spoke about these matters, I read directly from the statement of the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal George, about the need to work with the new administration and Congress on a whole host of issues, including the social issues noted above and abortion. They also heard me express enthusiastic support for this full agenda. Even more curious is the recent claim by a columnist that I was silent on Measure 11. Yet, I was the only religious leader invited to speak at the Vote Yes For Life rally, and I distributed a statement supporting Measure 11 to all parishioners prior to the November vote.

Our nation now needs to unite. Our people are hurting. All leaders, including those in the media, should work to build solidarity in society and not create divisions where there are none. I genuinely value your trust in me, and I will do whatever it takes to safeguard it whenever it seems to be threatened. In this season of Thanksgiving, I take this occasion to say thanks to you for that trust.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Blase J. Cupich
Bishop of Rapid City

This Week at Our Lady of the Black Hills

Intercessory Prayers

Life and Health Concerns: Warren Albertson, Joe Creek, Tony Greer, Marvin Kari, Tom Lawrence, Fr. Dick McCaslin, Lois Moller, Josephine & Lloyd Rogers, Nancy Sass and Don Snyder

Repose: Ben Roller, Sara Beth Sewell, Duke Deisch, Mary Zandri

Collection Report

November 16, 2008

Loose	$ 1646.64
Envelopes	1472.00
Student	77.57
Building Fund	0.00
Adopt a Seminarian	0.00
Other	399.65
Total	**$ 3595.80**

Monday, November 24

Memorial of St Andrew Dung-Lac
Revelations 14:1-3, 4-5; Psalm 24:1-6; Luke 21:1-4 (red)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: for Jodi Kaup's Birthday)
3:00 – 7:00 pm: Blood Drive
6:30 – 8:00 pm: Cub Scouts

Tuesday, November 25

Revelations 14:14-19; Psalm 96:10-13; Luke 21:5-11 (green/red)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: For Christian Unity, especially among the churches in Piedmont Valley)
6:30 – 7:45 pm: Returning Catholics Core Team
7:00 – 8:30 pm: Boy Scouts
7:00 pm: Piedmont Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, Stagebarn Receptions

Wed., November 26

Revelations 15:1-4; Psalm 98:1-3, 7-9; Luke 21:12-19 (green)
8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: For all who have been affected by sexual abuse)
9:00 am – noon: Food Pantry
6:30 – 8:00 pm: Gatherings of Grace Core Meeting

Thursday, November 27

Sirach 50:22-14; Psalm 138:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Luke 17:11-19 (green/white)
9:00 am: Thanksgiving Day Liturgy (Intention: For grateful hearts and the many blessings in our lives).
Church Offices Closed

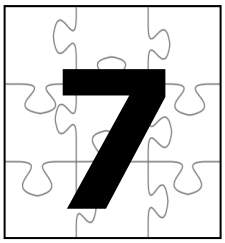
Friday, November 28

Revelations 20:1-4, 11-21:2; Psalm 84:3-6, 8; Luke 21:29-33 (green)
No Daily Liturgy
Church Offices Closed

Saturday Morning, November 29

Revelations 22:1-7; Psalm 95:1-7; Luke 21:34-36 (green/white)
No Daily Liturgy
9:00 am – noon: Food Pantry

Saturday Evening, November 29



First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7; Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (violet)
3:30 – 4:30 pm: Sacrament of Reconciliation
5:00 pm: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For a Holy Advent Season)

Sunday, November 30

First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7; Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (violet)
8:00 am: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: To foster better communication as a parish community)
9:15 – 10:00 am: Children's Choir rehearsal
10:30 am: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the OLBH parish community)

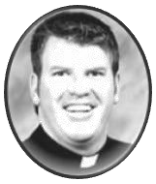
Mass Ministry Schedule

11/29 - 11/30	5:00 pm	8:00 am	10:30 am
Bread Baker	Mary Blauvelt		
Altar Servers	Jessica Schacher Kimberly Schacher Olivia Lyle	Whitney Werdel Kerry Wilson Taylor Thies	Tyler Corbine Andrew Corbine Curt Mahaffy
Precious Body	Brenda Czmowski	Kevin Rohrbach	Lorinda Collings
Precious Blood	Jacqui Blaha Jayme Hunt Reggie Hunt Diane Clarke	Caitlin Wilson Donna Boner Frank Boner Marty Quinn	Bernadette Usera John Usera Katie Strand Stephanie Strand
Lectors	Steve Colgan Sue Colgan	Taylor Rohrbach Marty Quinn	Bridgette Fode David Strand
Sacristans	Joe & Linda Schacher	Frank & Donna Boner	Ken & Kathy Van Asma
Ushers	Bette Stebbins	Don Everson Marc Jacobs	Bob Wentz Pam Wentz
Choir	Lori Miller	Regina's Minstrels	Lori Miller

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is the most common symbol of Advent. Each piece of the Advent wreath symbolizes some part of our preparations of Jesus' birth on Christmas day. The circular shape symbolizes eternal life; the purple advent candles symbolize our waiting or repentance; the pink advent candle symbolizes our joy of Christmas; the light from the lit advent candles symbolize Jesus as "The Light of the World."

http://www.usccb.org/advent/about.shtml



Sparks from Father Mark

The last several months, the Pastoral Council has been praying and brainstorming on a number of topics that we would like to look at in the coming year or so with the help of Karen McGuigan. One of the top priorities of the Council focuses on how we communicate as a parish community.

The parish seems to be growing not only with new parishioners but new ministries and activities as well. Sometimes it is hard to keep track of the many events that happen in the parish from week to week and month to month. As a way to help communication in the parish, the Pastoral Council has been working on a communication plan. These are some things that you can be looking forward too. A monthly calendar with all the parish comings and goings will be published at the being of each month and inserted into the bulletin—eventually it will be on-line as well. As part of every Pastoral Council meeting we have started to the practice of reviewing the parish calendar for the next month. At each Council meeting there will be several ministries and or committees that will share with the Pastoral Council their work in the parish, for example at our last Pastoral Council on November 17 Gary and Barb Erickson who coordinate the Sacristans and Greg Sass who coordinates the Returning Catholic, a new ministry in the parish, shared with us. Additionally, there will be copies of the Pastoral Council's minutes made available in the gathering area as well as on the web shortly after each Council meeting.

The staff along with the many different committees will be working on a yearly calendar plan with the intention of making sure we try not to double and triple book events on the same day or night.

If you have any other thoughts of how we might communicate better as a parish community or know someone who has an expertise in communication practice or theory please contact the parish office.

In next week Sparks I will say more about the work of the council and some of the other priorities the council is looking at in the coming year.

Blessings,

OLBH Parish News

Returning Catholic Ministry

Everyone interested in finding out more about the Returning Catholic Ministry, is invited to attend an informational meeting on Monday, December 1st at 7:00 PM. During this meeting, an overview of the program will be presented, core team members introduced, overview of how you can help, and a short video presented. If you are unable to attend this meeting, but would like more information, please contact Greg Sass at 348-2213 or greg.sass@olbh.org.

Thanksgiving Liturgy

Piedmont Valley Ministerial Association Thanksgiving Liturgy Tuesday November 25 at Stagebarn Receptions sponsored by Hills View Evangelical Free Church. I hope a good number of us from OLBH will be able to attend as seek to pray with one another fostering the hope of Christian unity among us.

Giving Tree

Our annual Christmas Giving Tree is up! You will notice tags hanging on the tree that describe gifts for people in need. Please take a tag, buy the gift, and bring it back to the church, unwrapped, with the tag attached—no later than December 7. If you have questions, or know of someone who could use a gift, please call Judy at 716-4647 or Dorothy at 787-4509.

Advent Taize Retreat

Advent Taize Retreat Sunday December 7, 2008 4:00 - 8:00 pm. A simple meal will be served and a free will offering will be taken up.

Pancakes . . . and Books!

The Knights of Columbus will sponsor one of their famous Pancake Breakfasts on December 7th from 8 am to Noon. Coffee, juice, pancakes, eggs and sausage will be served. Come one, come all to get a breakfast that will satisfy. Free will donations for breakfast will go to the Seminarian Fund. There will also be a OLBH Library Book Sale December 7th during the pancake breakfast time.

Children and Teens Choir

We are starting a choir for third graders through tenth graders. We will sing at the 5 pm Mass on Christmas Eve. Rehearsals will be held on Sundays, November 16, 23, and 30; and December 14 and 21 from 9:15 to 10 am in the practice room downstairs. See you there! Questions? Call Lorraine at 787-5168.

*Just*FAITH

When was the last time you had an experience that was "soul satisfying"? If you are looking to encounter your faith in a way that challenges you and how you are to live as a Christian in today's world, then *Just*Faith may be the program for you. For thirty weeks you will journey with other seekers using books, videos, conversation, and encounters with those who live at the margins of society. *Just*Faith will run from the first week of December to about the first week of July. Sound good? Call Cathy Larsen 484-5620 or Christle Usera 430-0147.

For the Ride Home

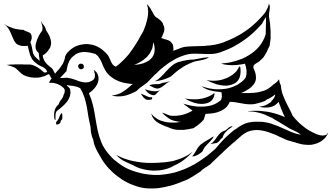
by Ted Bergh

Scripture

- The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal… (Ezekiel 34:16)
- In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me; you restore my strength. You guide me along the right path for the sake of your name. (Psalm 23:2-3)
- For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

Reflection

- How do you become Christ on earth?
- How does Jesus seek you out to do his will?



Prefer nothing to the love of Christ. (The Rule of Benedict)[1]
The true peacemakers are those who preserve the peace of mind and body for love of our Lord Jesus Christ. (St. Francis of Assisi) [2]

[1]Feiss, Hugh, O.S.B., *Essential Monastic Wisdom*, Harper: San Francisco, 1999, p.185.
[2]Simsic, Wayne, *Living the Wisdom of St. Francis*, Paulist; Mahwah, NJ, p. 73.

Diocesan News

A Message from Pope Benedict XVI

"Children deserve to grow up with a healthy understanding of sexuality and its proper place in human relationships. They should be spared the degrading manifestations and the crude manipulation of sexuality so prevalent today. They have a right to be educated in authentic moral values rooted in the dignity of the human person. This brings us back to our consideration of the centrality of the family and the need to promote the Gospel of life. What does it mean to speak of child protection when pornography and violence can be viewed in so many homes through media widely available today? We need to reassess urgently the values underpinning society, so that a sound moral formation can be offered to young people and adults alike."

Pope Benedict XVI, Celebration of Vespers and Meeting with the Bishops of the United States of America, April 16, 2008 (From the Diocesan Pro-Life Commission)

Higher Ground…

a place where people come to learn more about the Catholic faith and grow in their relationship with God. Wednesdays-7 – 8:30 pm (11th grade and older) at St. Therese, the Little Flower, 532 Adams St., Rapid City **New Presentation: Beginning Dec. 3rd with Chad & Julie Carroll; "Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body" – New Translation. Books available for use or purchase ($20) the first night. You are welcome to attend any, or all, Wednesdays.

Letting Go for Christmas

This one-day, interdenominational retreat on forgiveness will be held Saturday, December 6, 9 am to 3 pm at St. Martin Monastery. It is recommended for anyone wanting to let go of sadness, anger, hurts and other negative obsessions as preparation for receiving more abundantly at Christmas. The registration fee of $30 includes lunch. Preregistration is required by November 24--contact Catholic Social Services at 348-6086.

CSS Employment Opportunity

Full time Receptionist/Secretary. Must have excellent Microsoft Office skills, communication and organizational skills and be able to multi-task. Salary DOE. Competitive benefits package. Send resume to Catholic Social Services, 918 Fifth St., Rapid City, SD 57701 or email to css@rapidnet.com.

Charitable Gifts from IRA Accounts – Income Tax Benefits Extended

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 permits individuals who have reached age 70½ to exclude from gross income certain distributions of up to $100,000 from a traditional IRA. In order to be excluded from gross income, the distributed funds must be paid directly by the IRA trustee to a qualified charitable organization. In general, a qualified charitable organization is one for which an itemized deduction is allowed if payment is made to the organization. Your parish, the diocese, the Western South Dakota Catholic Foundation, Catholic Social Services and the Rapid City Catholic School System are all qualified charitable organizations.

The 2008 Extenders Act passed into law on October 3, 2008, extends the tax benefits for charitable giving from IRA accounts to IRA distributions made during 2008 and 2009. If you will be age 70 ½ or older during 2008 or 2009, have funds in an IRA, and are interested in donating to a charitable organization, this new rule may generate significant income tax benefits for you. Check with your tax advisor.